



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks **RECEIVED**

1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

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LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY OFFICE

To: Governor's Office, Mike Volesky, State Capitol, Room 204, P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, State Capitol, Room 106, P.O. Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:

Director's Office	Parks Division	Lands Section	FWP Commissioners
Fisheries Division	Legal Unit	Wildlife Division	Design & Construction

MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202
MT State Parks Association, P.O. Box 699, Billings, MT 59103
MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620
James Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
George Ochenski, P.O. Box 689, Helena, MT 59624
Jerry DiMarco, P.O. Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771
Montana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624
Wayne Hurst, P.O. Box 728, Libby, MT 59923

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Decision Notice has been prepared by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) for the Axtell Bridge Fishing Access Site Improvement Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). Three public comments were received on this proposal during the 30-day comment period that ended on December 22, 2004.

It is my decision to proceed with the proposed project, with no changes to the Draft EA.

The Draft EA as well as this Decision Notice are available for review in Helena at FWP's Headquarters, the State Library, and the Environmental Quality Council. They may also be obtained from FWP at the address provided above, or viewed on FWP's Internet website: <http://www.fwp.mt.gov>.

Questions regarding this Decision Notice should be mailed to:

Tom Greason
Park Manager
1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

Or e-mailed to: tgreason@montana.edu

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Flowers
Region Three Supervisor

Attachment

AXTELL BRIDGE FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMNTS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICE

**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region Three, Bozeman
February 2005**

Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to improve the Axtell Bridge Fishing Access Site (FAS), located on the West Gallatin River, by increasing defined parking spaces, constructing a second entrance road, setting new rock barriers, and adding a American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant accessible parking pad.

An additional parking area would be built to accommodate five more vehicles, while the current interior parking area would be reconfigured to also park five vehicles, thus creating a total of ten parking spaces. A new entrance road would be built from the east creating flow through traffic rather than the current same way in -- same way out situation. An ADA compliant parking pad would be added, thereby making the existing latrine and site more accessible for disabled visitors. Rock barriers would be placed to define parking and vehicle limits, and new regulation and informational signing would be installed.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on November 23, 2004.

Public comments on the proposed project were taken for 30 days. The EA was mailed to 27 individuals and groups; legal notices were printed in the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* and the *Helena Independent Record*; and the EA was posted on the FWP webpage: <http://www.fwp.mt.gov>.

Summary of Public Comment

Three comments were received on the proposal.

- 1) An adjacent neighbor requested that FWP include four actions in the project in order to discourage and mitigate trespassing. These four items are: move the new entrance as far south as possible away from the private property boundary, plant trees along the northern side of the new development for screening, place sufficient barrier rocks on-site to discourage visitors from wandering on to

adjacent private property, and to post signs at strategic locations in order to "educate" users about the public/private land interface.

Response: All four of the suggested action items are reasonable and affordable within the scope and budget of the proposed project. The neighbor will be asked for on-site input on the new entrance road location and for the strategic placement of barrier rocks for "steering" visitors away from our mutual property line. New tree plantings (conifers preferred) will be included in the project bid and placed along the edge of the new road entrance. Appropriate signing regarding trespass and stream access will be erected along the river at the FAS northern property boundary.

- 2) At the time of the EA distribution, The Montana State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) had not reviewed the cultural survey for the proposed Axtell Bridge project. Consequently, they could not give any recommendations regarding the impacts of the project to cultural resources in the proposed construction area. This position was stated in a letter dated November 24, 2004.

Response: On January 5, 2005, FWP received a letter from SHPO, in which they stated that there is a low likelihood of impacts to cultural resources if the proposed project should proceed.

- 3) A private citizen wrote, "I do believe that many local people will be happy with the improvements you plan to do at Axtell Bridge. Being close to town, it looks like a good thing!"

Final Environmental Assessment for the Axtell Bridge Fishing Access Site Improvements Proposal

There are no modifications necessary to the to the Draft Environmental Assessment based on public comment. The Draft Environmental Assessment, together with this Decision Notice, will serve as the final document for this proposal.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment and the need for providing parking facilities at Axtell Fishing Access, it is my decision to proceed with the improvement project.

I find there to be no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.



Patrick J. Flowers
Region Three Supervisor